Space-Time (Dis)continuities in the Linguistic Landscape

Studies in the Symbolic (Re-)appropriation of Public Space

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Chapter 8

Commemorative street naming practices in the border towns Frankfurt (Oder)/Słubice

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1 Introduction

Cultural memory in Assmann's sense (2010) is institutionalized and embedded in material objects, cultural artefacts, and history books; it also shapes the semiotic landscape, providing us with reference points for identification and hegemonic constructions of belonging (Tufi 2019; Bendl 2020). Linguistic landscape (LL) research has contributed to the analysis of cultural memory by analyzing "which visions of history are entitled to be inscribed on street signs" of a particular nation or polity (Azaryahu 2012: 388). This chapter explores the ways in which change in nation-state affiliation is indexically marked in the LL of what used to be one coherent cityscape. We focus on changes in the streetscape of the formerly unified town of Frankfurt (Oder) (henceforth Frankfurt). As a result of the shifting German-Polish border, the suburb called Dammvorstadt on the eastern side of the River Oder was allocated to Poland in 1945 and renamed Słubice, whereas the main part of Frankfurt remained in Germany. This shift in geopolitical allegiances and ethnolinguistic identity provides us with a paradigm case for a comparative study of time–space discontinuities in the LL.

Memory studies and research in the LL have documented street (re) naming in Eastern Europe[1] as a result of multiple waves of ideological reorientations, yet this research rarely transgresses disciplinary and geopolitical boundaries. To date, systematic comparative research is scarce (but see Tufi and Blackwood 2015; Light and Young 2018) and large-scale longitudinal analyses are almost non-existent. This chapter draws on recent work by Fabiszak et al. (2021) and Buchstaller (2021), Buchstaller et al. (2023a) to explore renaming practices across a "time-space matrix of long and short historical periods and locations" (Azaryahu 1997: 480). To this aim, we explore the longitudinal effects of shifting geopolitical borders on commemorative street naming patterns by investigating ideologically driven changes in the urban landscape of what used to be one city. Research on the twin cities of Frankfurt/Słubice reveals important

differences in commemorative practices between two countries since 1945, differences that are closely tied to the emplaced political history of these communities. While Frankfurt retained its German identity, albeit that of a new border town, the toponymy of Dammvorstadt, the newly independent city on the east side of the Oder was completely erased by the Polish post-WWII administration and replaced with figures from the Polish national pantheon and communist imagery. Since this dramatic population exchange precluded the formation of a sense of local identity or belonging amongst the Polish residents in the post-German town, the commemorative streetscape of Słubice lacked references to local history and historical figures of local importance until the most recent years of the investigated period (1945–2018). Our analysis zooms in on possibilities for past-present-future connections in memorialization as well as strategies for bridging the commemorative gap constituted by the River Oder. As such, the research presented in this paper contributes to recent work on polyhistoricity (Bendl 2020, see also Blommaert 2005) in excavating the multilayered history, heritage, and ideologies that street names commit to public memory – designed to make in/visible the past in the present for the future.

2 Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice: a brief historical background

The recorded history of Frankfurt (Oder) began in the 13th century as a West Slavic settlement. Since then, it has been part of the Kingdom of Poland, the Margraviate of Brandenburg, the Bohemian Crown, Prussia, and finally Germany. In 1368, Frankfurt joined the Hanseatic League, a medieval commercial and defensive confederation of merchant guilds and market towns in central and northern Europe (Städtebund die Hanse, n.d.). Its university, a relatively early foundation (1506) was dissolved intermittently during the 30 Years' War (1618–1648) and finally merged with the University of Breslau (present-day Wrocław, Poland) in 1811.

Nazi Germany's defeat in WWII resulted in the redrawing of its eastern borders, with the regions of Pomerania, East Brandenburg, Silesia, and East Prussia (now called the Western and Northern Territories) being incorporated into Poland as a compensation for its loss of formerly Polish eastern borderlands (i.e., Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, and Western Lithuania) to the USSR in 1939 (Davies 2005). Since then, the new Polish-German border has run along the rivers Oder and Neisse, forcing Frankfurt apart from its former eastern suburb Dammvorstadt, which became an independent Polish town: Słubice. The majority of the German population was expelled from Słubice in 1945 and replaced by Polish populations recruited from three areas: the neighbouring region of Wielkopolska, central Poland, and the former Polish eastern borderlands. The post-WWII border on the Oder-Neisse has gradually "lost its importance for the bilateral relations between Germany and Poland" (Klomp 2019: 355);

starting out as a bone of contention, it was formally acknowledged by East Germany in 1950, by West Germany in 1970 and finally ratified during German reunification in 1990 (Deutsch-polnischer Grenzvertrag 1990). Today, due to EU membership of both states, the border is relatively permeable: the sister cities share many urban amenities and collaborate on various projects, such as a cross-border heating system and a bus line that serves both towns, as well as the Collegium Polonicum, a joint research centre between Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the Viadrina University in Frankfurt that supports interdisciplinary research on areas such as the Polish-German borderland. Figure 8.1 presents the timeline of the study.

Frankfurt, on the west bank of the Oder, is by far the larger of the two cities. It reached a population peak with more than 87,000 inhabitants at the end of the 1980s but its population has decreased significantly following German reunification, stabilizing at about 58,000 inhabitants (Landesbetrieb für Datenverarbeitung und Statistik 2006). While the pre-war suburb Dammvorstadt had 15,600 inhabitants in 1939, following the removal of the German citizens in 1946 the population of what now became the Polish town of Słubice dropped to just above 600 in 1946. Since then, population size has risen steadily to about 17,637 in 1998, stabilizing at around 16,800 in the 2010s (Kulczyńska 2020: 46).

3 Research on the LL in Polish and East German cities

"Recent studies have documented and analysed commemorative renaming of streets following power shifts within societies and their ideological reorientation in connection with the capital cities of post-communist societies in the 1990s, such as East Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest and Moscow" (Azaryahu 2012: 389). To date, however, most research on street renaming in central Europe is either purely descriptive or conducted within a critical political geography framework that focuses on the decision-making procedures and ideological backdrop involved in the process of renaming (Azaryahu 1986, 1996, 1997). These works suggest that during the
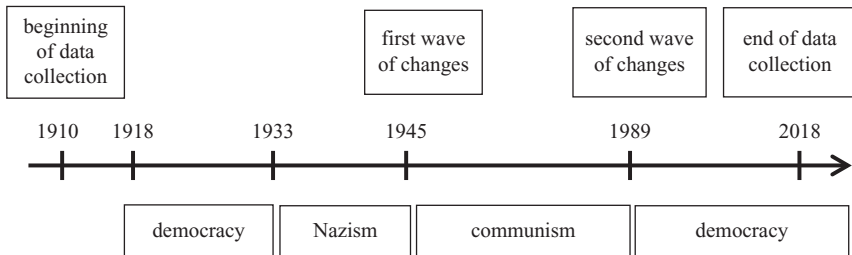

Figure 8.1 The timeline of the data collection.

Third Reich, numerous street names "denoting undesirable democratic political traditions [were removed and renamed] … with appropriate Nazi names" (Azaryahu 1986: 81). Denazification began immediately after the arrival of the Allied troops and quickly turned into an ideological process, contingent on the respective political climate, and therefore dividing East and West in their strategies to rename. "In the GDR [German Democratic Republic], streets and squares were often dedicated to … socialist fig- ureheads, especially Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Lenin" as well as names that reflected anti-fascist ideology and acts of solidarity with other communist countries such as Russia (*Tchaikovskystrasse*, Tchaikovsky – Russian composer, *Strasse* – 'street' in German) or Poland (*Chopinstrasse*, Chopin, Polish composer, Germanhistorydocs, n.d.). Eastern Germany also took part in Stalinization after 1949, resulting in names such as *Stalinallee* or *Leninstrasse*. After the political transformation of 1989– 1990, public symbols such as "monuments, street names … that reflected the GDR's understanding of socialist tradition were called into question" (Germanhistorydocs, n.d.). The renaming patterns that have resulted from this political reorientation tend to be locally specific, with different cities taking a more or less drastic approach to eliminating socialist-communist heritage from their streetscapes (Buchstaller et al. 2023a).

The LL east of the River Oder followed very different geopolitical con- siderations after 1945. On the toponymic level, what was required after the end of WWII was the administrative and symbolic integration into the Polish state, including the visual marking of new national imaginaries in the LL as new Polish settlers encountered a hostile semiotic environment, commemorating Nazi figures as well as symbols of the German national imagery (e.g., national heroes, great artists, and geographical referents). The first wave of street renaming after 1945 was done bottom-up by the settlers themselves in an attempt to familiarize and tame the alien LL. This was followed by a more systematic rewriting of the toponymy by the State Commission for the Determination of Place Names as well as by town and city administrations. Overall, there are three main reasons for chang- ing place-names in the new Polish territories after WWII (Utracki 2013, Wagińska-Marzec 1997):

(1) practical reasons: the need for Polish names to facilitate the opera- tion of the Polish post and Polish railways in the territories granted to Poland after WWII,
(2) socioemotional reasons related to the attempt of making the new ter- ritories "home" for the displaced Polish population,
(3) politiconational reasons: to legitimize the symbolic claim of the Polish nation-state over these territories.

The renaming patterns encountered in Słubice are very much in line with the strategies reported from other areas which housed negligible Polish speaking populations before WWII, such as Breslau/Wrocław and Stettin/Szczecin (Ordyłowski 2010: 292, 294; Grzelak 2010, Thum 2011). In these areas, national commemoration prevailed, resulting in the inscription of historical events and personages related to the medieval Polish Piast dynasty. Note that this nationalist framing marked these areas symbolically as "regained territories", i.e., territories controlled during the Middle Ages by Polish kings and "regained" after WWII, a legitimization of the Polish claim over this territory. Hence, as was the case west of the river, commemorative street names were recruited to invoke a national cultural and geographical imagery. During the post-1989 transformation period, streets in the Polish cities of the Western and Northern Territories (WNT) were cleansed of socialist ideology, yet to a lesser extent than in other Polish regions because there were no pre-war Polish names they could return to (Różycki 2019).

We will now explore the way in which national imaginaries in conjunction with changes in system-specific political ideologies (from national socialism to communism to capitalist democracy) are encoded in Frankfurt and Słubice. Our analysis aims to answer the question of how the political division of what used to be one city after WWII has played out in the LL of these two cities. More specifically, we comparatively explore the ways in which a total population turnover in Słubice and a relatively stable settlement pattern in Frankfurt (Oder) have affected commemorative street renaming practices.

4 Data and methods

Our dataset is based on the entirety of all street names in both cities. The starting point of our analysis was 2018, and we worked our way backwards in time. Crucially, the two cities were highly unequal in size: in 2018, Frankfurt (Oder) had 590 streets whereas Słubice had 140 streets. Our geographical data is based on OpenStreetMap (OSM), a digital map of the world, created and constantly updated by volunteers and released with an open access licence, allowing free access for academic and research purposes (https://www.openstreetmap.org). Data on historical changes in street (re)naming for Frankfurt were compiled from the online version of the Museum Viadrina (n.d.) guide entitled *Strassenlexikon Frankfurt (Oder)*. For Słubice we consulted town council resolutions 1945–2015, an index of changes in street names from 1948 based on the town council minutes, as well as copies of two letters from the Trade Union Solidarity from 1989 and 2020 calling for street renaming. These materials were cross-referenced with historical maps for Frankfurt.[2]

The resulting data were entered and processed in Excel. Following the epistemology outlined in Fabiszak et al. (2021), all cases of street (re) naming were coded for whether the incoming and outgoing street names were ideological in nature or not. Table 8.1 presents examples of such annotation.

As pointed out by K. Palonen (2018), any naming decision in the public streetscape is by definition a political one. However, as we point out in Fabiszak et al. (2021), street renaming can either result in the preservation, increase or reduction of the ideological load in the streetscape. The analysis presented here focuses on the respective outcomes of onomastic strategies, as illustrated in Table 8.1: example (1) shows how in Frankfurt (Oder) in 1945 *Strasse der SA*, inscribing the paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party (SA – Sturmabteilung 'Storm Detachment') into the landscape, is replaced by Karl Marx, an eminent communist thinker. In Słubice, also in 1945, the Polish administration changes the German street name *Am Wiesenhaus* 'At the House in the Meadows' to Polish *ul. Grzybowa* 'Mushroom Street' (example (4)). In both cases the number of the ideologically marked streets is preserved. In the first case one ideologically loaded street name is replaced with another ideologically loaded street name, each representing a different ideology (Nazism versus Communism). In the second case a non-ideological name is replaced with another non-ideological name, both relating to different natural referents. Examples (2) and (5) result in the increase of the number of ideologically marked streets in the cityscape, when in Słubice in 1945 *Neuer Markt* 'New Market' is replaced with *plac Stalina* 'Stalin Square' (example (2)) and in 1992 a new street is named after a Polish poet Adam Asnyk (example (5)). The first change replaces a neutral referent with a communist leader of the Soviet Union, while the second change introduces a reference to the Polish national literary canon. Finally, renamings can also reduce the ideological load in the cityscape by replacing an ideologically marked street with a neutral referent. This was the case in Frankfurt (Oder) in 1961 when *Stalinallee* was changed to *Oderallee*, the name of the river that flows through the

Table 8.1 Coding procedure: outcomes of street renaming.

No	Street name before renaming	Year of renaming	Street name after renaming	Outcome of renaming
(1)	SA-strasse	1945	Karl-Marx-Strasse	ideological
(2)	Neuer Markt	1945	plac Stalina	ideological
(3)	Stalinallee	1961	Oderallee	non-ideological
(4)	Am Wiesenhaus	1945	ul. Grzybowa	non-ideological
(5)	–	1992	ul. Adama Asnyka	ideological
(6)	–	1992	ul. Kwiatowa	non-ideological

city (example (3)). In 1992 in Słubice a new street is named *ul. Kwiatowa* 'Flower Street', a nature-related referent, thus increasing the number of non-ideologically marked streets.

The matching of street names with geographical data and mapping was undertaken in the Free and Open Source Geographic Information System QGIS (https://qgis.org). The resulting quantitative findings were supplemented with ethnographic data. We conducted five interviews in Słubice and five in Frankfurt with city officials, journalists, a representative of a local foundation. We also conducted three focus groups in Słubice and two in Frankfurt with teachers, librarians, archivists, and local activists. The individual interviews varied in length between 30 and 90 minutes and focus groups between 60 and 90 minutes. The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed within the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2009) to Critical Discourse Studies. These analyses allowed us to situate the quantitative findings in the socio-political, cultural and historical contexts.

5 Time-space (dis)continuities in street (re)naming patterns

5.1 Encoding of national worldview in the streetscape

Since the western part of Frankfurt remained German throughout the period investigated, the encoding of national and regional symbolism in the cityscape was a continuous and cumulative process. Street names commemorating German cultural pre-eminence and, since the GDR, increasingly also scientific excellence, have been incrementally added to the landscape throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. This commemorative layering in the ideological robe of the city (Zieliński 1994) is exemplified by the addition of street names such as *Kantstrasse* (Kant, a philosopher) in 1925, *Mozartstrasse* in 1947, and *Carl-Philipp-Emanuel-Bach-Strasse* in 1965 (both named after composers), *Werner-von-Siemens-Strasse* in 1996 and *Georg-Simon-Ohm-Strasse* in 2006 (named after scientists).[3]

Crucially, those artistic and scientific geniuses that are immortalized in the Frankfurt citytext tend to be selected for commemoration not only for their achievements, but also because they index particular political-ideological agendas. Examples for the GDR political era are the encoding of cosmonauts typical for the commemorative priorities of Eastern Bloc countries during the space race, or of left-leaning artists such as Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda. Post-transformation, in line with the strategy of "righting the wrongs of the past" described for other East German cities (Buchstaller et al. 2023a), we find the Jewish engineer Gerhard Neumann and the nuclear chemist Otto Hahn, who was well known for his protection of Jewish scientists (both commemorated in 2006). Also encoded are

peace activists, journalists, or politicians/political activists who were persecuted during the Nazi and GDR times.

The situation was quite different in Dammvorstadt, which, until 1945, was a working-class suburb and as such of little symbolic value. Only four of 64 streets were ideological, commemorating historical figures or titles: *Prinzenufer* 'Prince's Bank', *Friedrichstrasse*, *Leopoldstrasse* (after Frederick III, King of Prussia and Leopold, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneberg, a Prussian general), and *Seydlitzstrasse* (referring to Walther von Seydlitz, a Prussian general). Following WWII and under the new Polish administration, 43 street names became commemorative, which erased the peripheral nature of Dammvorstadt and changed it into Słubice – an independent urban organism and a place indexing the ideological, national, and communist struggle for symbolic toponymic representation. The infusion of ideological semantics is illustrated here by two examples: *Kleine Blumen Strasse* 'Small Flowers Street' became *ul. Marii Konopnickiej* (*ulica* 'street'; Konopnicka – a Polish poetess); *Schwiebuser Strasse* (place-name of a nearby town) became *ul. Świerczewskiego* (commemorating a Polish communist general). Of the remaining 21 street names, six were translated word by word (marked in green in Figure 8.2, e.g., *Sandstrasse* became *ul. Piaskowa* 'Sand Street'), four of which changed again later), and 16 were renamed with another ideologically neutral name, e.g., *Am Wiesenhaus* 'At the House in the Meadows' became *ul. Grzybowa* 'Mushroom Street'.

As Figure 8.2 reveals, the socialist regimes on both sides of the River Oder are united in effectuating a relatively thorough ideological saturation of the streetscape. As we will discuss below, this resemantization was the result of different ideological motives and policy decisions in these two sites. Moreover, in Słubice, ideological renamings dominate, whereas there is an equal number of ideological and non-ideological (re)namings in Frankfurt. In the following, we will briefly sketch a timeline of the main renaming strategies in Frankfurt/Słubice during the communist era.

On the west side of the Oder, in Frankfurt, the communist-socialist marking of the streetscape started as early as 1945, when *SA-strasse* (referring to *Sturmabteilung*, a Nazi paramilitary organization) and a street named after Siegfried Kasche, an eminent SA officer, were replaced by Karl Marx and Karl Liebknecht respectively. Indeed, contrary to the Dammvorstadt-cum-Słubice streetscape, which featured comparatively little political ideology, the initial post-WWII renaming strategy in Frankfurt was primarily motivated by the imperative to erase Nazi denotation (Azaryahu 1986, 2012; Buchstaller et al. 2023a). Street renaming thus aimed at aligning the streetscape with the commemorative priorities of the new political regime, resulting in the encoding of socialist-communist semantics in the citytext. In 1947, for example, two icons of the Nazi pantheon, (*Horst-Wessel-Platz*
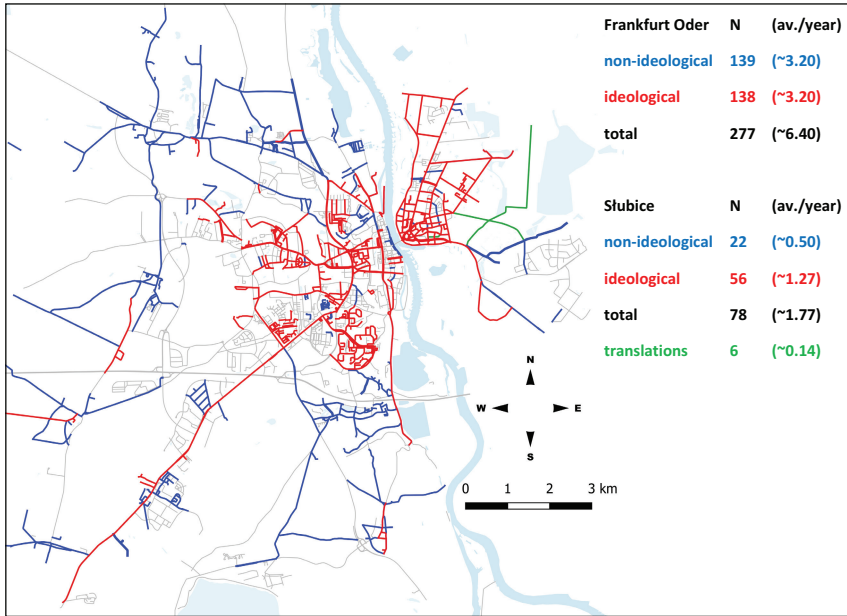
Frankfurt Oder	N	(av./year)
non-ideological	139	(~3.20)
ideological	138	(~3.20)
total	277	(~6.40)
Słubice	N	(av./year)
non-ideological	22	(~0.50)
ideological	56	(~1.27)
total	78	(~1.77)
translations	6	(~0.14)

Figure 8.2 Street (re)naming patterns 1945–1988 with ideological (in red) and non-ideological outcome (in blue) in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. Translations retained until 1988 in green.

and *Schlageterstrasse*) were named after early democrats (*Thälmannplatz* and *Rathenaustrasse*) and SA Sturmgruppenführer (group leader) Litzmann was replaced by Wilhelm Pieck, the head of the GDR in 1953.

In Słubice, the main motivation underlying the first wave of street renaming in 1945 was to de-alienate it, imprint Polish national identity into the cityscape and make it more hospitable for the new inhabitants that were resettled from the lost Polish eastern borderlands. This resulted in the commemoration of luminaries from the Polish national imaginary, including writers (e.g., *Kurzestrasse* 'Short Street' and *Leopoldstrasse* were combined and the longer street was named *ul. Słowackiego*, commemorating a Polish romantic poet), artists and scientists (*Frauendorferstrasse* and *Holzhofstrasse*, encoding a nearby small town and a building yard became *ul. Chopina* and *ul. Kopernika*, commemorating a Polish composer and an astronomer), soldiers (*Kattowitzerstrasse*, named after the capital of Silesia, which changed hands from Germany to Poland became *ul. Kilińskiego*, memorializing an 18th/19th-century soldier), or values (*Neuer Markt* 'New Market' became *Plac Wolności* 'Freedom Square').

Two streets were renamed to commemorate historical personages of regional importance, and we interpret this encoding of local indexicality

as an attempt to establish commemorative rootedness in the Słubice vicinity, an important strategy for what was effectively a new city of displaced inhabitants: *Seydlitzstrasse*, named after a Prussian general, is replaced by Maciej Mirosławski, a Polish general in the Napoleonic wars, who died by suicide in nearby Zittau. Similarly, *Drenzigerstrasse*, an orientational name after a nearby village, was renamed after Augustyn Szamarzewski, a 19th-century priest and social activist from the neighbouring Wielkopolska region. This trend was further strengthened in 1948, when six more streets were named after figures from the Polish national pantheon, and one was chosen again from Wielkopolska. Note that this pattern of commemorative replacement is different from the renaming pattern reported in Oppeln/Opole in the Silesia region at the same point in time (Choroś and Jarczak 2011: 214). Oppeln/Opole, like much of the region of Silesia, has been inhabited by German, Polish, and Czech populations for several centuries. Thus, when German Oppeln became Polish Opole, the town administration had a pool of local personages to draw from in renaming some of the streets. In Słubice, however, the historical absence of any local personages connected to Polish national history resulted in the "borrowing" of such figures from the neighbouring region in Poland.

Another important trend in Słubice in the early post-WWII years reflected the ideological (communist) sympathies of the newly established Polish administration. Sixteen names commemorated communist leaders and military commanders (e.g., a part of *Neuer Markt* 'New Market' became *plac Stalina* 'Stalin Square'), historical personages with socialist sympathies appropriated by the communists (*Torfweg* 'Peat Way' became *ul. Nocznickiego*, named after a leader of a pre-WWII peasants' movement), or collective heroes (*Friedrichstrasse*, named after Friedrich II, King of Prussia became *ul. Armii Czerwonej* 'Red Army Street').

5.2 Encoding of imaginary geographies

As pointed out by Edward Said (1978: 55), "imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away". In this vein, place-names used as street names perform one of two functions: (1) they can be orientational (non-ideological) in nature, indicating that a given road leads towards a town of this name or anchoring the cityscape in the local geography or (2) they can serve as a "conventional tool of homeland-making – the symbolic socialization of the … population towards 'spatial identification with the territorial state as home' (Kaiser 2009; Paasi 1996)" (Vuolteenaho and Puzey 2018: 85).

Among the streets renamed in Słubice in 1945, two are clearly orientational (non-ideological), referring to nearby towns: a part of *Roßmarkt* 'Horse Market' became *ul. Seelowska* (after a nearby town of Seelow),

and *Reppener Strasse* became *ul. Rzepińska* (referring to Reppen/Rzepin, a town 50 km east of Słubice; the street name is a translation of the German place-name into Polish). The other two geographical streets (*Kunersdorfer Strasse,* a part of Słubice, became *ul. Wrocławska*, a city 300 km south-east; *Küstriner Oderdamm*, 'At Oder Dam towards Küstrin', now Kostrzyn, a town 33 km to the north, became *ul. Szczecińska*, a city 150 km north), refer to two major cities in the WNT that were undergoing intensive Polonization (marked in the name changes from Breslau to Wrocław, Stettin to Szczecin). Hence, while we might have interpreted such street names as neutral in character in the prewar era, indicating the direction to towns or cities in the nearby regions, at the cusp of regime change, when the boundaries between ethnolinguistic groups are redrawn, these renamings serve as a means of strengthening the Polish claim over this area: the replacement of local geographical names with two major cities in the Polish WNT index the extension of Polish national geography.

As we discussed above, the expansion of Polish western provinces came at the cost of German national territory. An important odonymic reversal in Frankfurt during the early years after WWII was thus the renaming of streets commemorating cities that had been part of Germany before, but were now on Polish or Russian soil, either due to shifting borders after WWII or because they had been allocated to Poland as a result of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (e.g., Gnesen and Posen, now Gniezno and Poznań).

In Frankfurt, the majority of streets encoding imaginary geographies that found themselves outside of the German national territory after WWII were overwritten with the names of authors (Gerhard Hauptmann) and musicians (Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz List, Georg Friedrich Händel, etc.) that epitomize the German artistic genius. Two street names referring to "lost" cities that are now situated in Poland and Russia (Stettin/Szecin and Königsberg/Kaliningrad) were replaced by Wismar and Rostock, old Hanseatic cities in the north of the GDR (renamed in 1953), and one street commemorating the annexation of Austria (Ostmark) was changed to commemorate Herman Boian, a pacifist who was killed in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The finding that the early GDR years saw the replacement of problematic geographies encoded in the streetscape fully supports Vuolteenaho and Puzey's (2018) research on the shrinking of the public geographical imaginary during the GDR era.

By 1974, however, a different, associative topographical worldview started being encoded into the Frankfurt streetscape, which was expanding into communist fraternal states. Streets previously named after Western (e.g., Hamburg, Kiel) and Eastern German Hanseatic cities (e.g., Greifswald) were now renamed after Polish or Russian cities, namely Moscow, Warsaw, or Zielona Góra. Note, however, that in reunified

democratic Germany, those streets have since returned to German place-names, with the bulk of renamings happening in 1992. We interpret these subsequent replacements of indexical geographies as representative of shifts in ideological alliance: from the West to the East and back.

One geographical constant, finally, is the self-identification of Frankfurt as a Hanseatic city throughout its history (with the naming of streets after well-known Hanse cities Stralsund and Lübeck in 1933, Hamburg, Kiel, and Bremen in 1934, Rostock in 1957, Moscow and Wismar in 1974, Hamburg and Kiel again in 1992 (see above) and Magdeburg and Stendal in 1993). While Hammele-Kiesow (2000) points to the touristic potential of marketing the Hanseatic League, the new Euro-Transport and Trade Center in Frankfurt's industrial zone, billed as the Gateway to the East, has seen Frankfurt acquire a wealth of newly built streets that strategically reference its function as a connector between East and West (in 1998 *Belgische Strasse* 'Belgian Street', *Französische Strasse* 'French Street', *Lettische Strasse* 'Latvian Street', *Polnische Strasse* 'Polish Street', in 2001 *Finnische Strasse* 'Finnish street', *Litauische Strasse* 'Lithuanian Street'). The naming of *Europaplatz* 'Europe Square', finally, coincided with the foundation of the Europa University Viadrina in 1991 in the course of the reconstruction of the university landscape in the eastern regions of unified Germany.

5.3 Destalinization/decommunization

The weakening of communist ideology and its symbolic marking in the cityscape of Słubice occurred in three waves: first, destalinization, following the death of Stalin (1953), second, the erasure of ideologically marked names at the time of the rise of the Solidarity movement (1980) and third, decommunization, after the transformation of 1989/1990.

In 1956, Nikita Khruschev gave a speech at the 20th party congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) entitled "On the cult of personality and its consequences", which galvanized a symbolic destalinization across the Eastern Bloc countries, with landmarks being decommemorated at differing speed across the geographies influenced by the USSR. In Słubice, destalinization occurred in 1956, when most salient communist street names were changed to less ideologically marked names: *Plac Stalina* 'Stalin Square' became *Plac Bohaterów* 'Heroes' Square'; *ul. Armii Czerwonej* 'Red Army Street' became *ul. Jedności Robotniczej* 'Workers' Unity Street'.[4] The latter street name remains in Słubice to this day, even though many typically socialist street names have disappeared from the cityscape in the years following 1989. In everyday conversation, however, it is referred to as *Zigarettenstrasse* 'Cigarettes Street', as many shops selling cigarettes to German buyers are located here.

The second wave erasing communist names started in 1980 as a result of the Polish Solidarity movement. The most salient example is the renaming, in 1987, of an entire housing estate which initially commemorated Dzierżyński, a Polish count and head of the Soviet state security, hence the change from *osiedle Dzierżyńskiego* 'Dzierżyński housing estate' to *ul. Piska* 'Piska Street' after the geographical name of a sister town in the WNT. The third and most thorough wave of decommunization took place in the years 1989–1990, after the end of the Cold War, when another seven streets were renamed.

While the process of renaming cities, streets, and institutions as a result of destalinization started in most of Eastern Europe soon after Khruschev's 1956 speech, in Frankfurt, like in much of the rest of the GDR, this process started somewhat later (Würz n.d.). Having only been commemorated in 1953, when two non-ideological streets (*Buschmühlenweg*, 'Mill in the Bushes Path' and *Lindenstrasse* 'Linden Street') were named after the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the purging of Stalin's name occurred in 1961. The street was named as *Oderallee* 'Avenue of the River Oder' following a special session of the Frankfurt city council on November 13, 1961.

The most active decommunization of street names in Frankfurt took place in the years 1991/1992, when, after the political transformation resulting in the reunification of Germany, 40 streets encoding communist-socialist ideology were changed in only two years. Roughly half of these reverted back to their original names, a strategy which Azaryahu (2018: 59) termed "recommemoration". An example of this reversal to older historical street names is illustrated in the naming of *Logenstrasse* ('Freemasons' Lodge Street'), which had been renamed in 1938 to *Litzmannstrasse* (after an SA-*Obergruppenführer*), changed to commemorate the still living president of the GDR (*Wilhelm-Pieck-Strasse*) in 1953 until it finally reverted back to its original name *Logenstrasse* in 1993. This recommemoration can be interpreted as a deliberate act of reconnection with democratic state forms, before the Nazi and GDR regimes and thus an act of memory formation that ties in with previous, politically aligned identity practices (see Buchstaller et al. 2020). Overall, as Figure 8.3 reveals, the post transformation period has resulted mainly in non-ideological (re)namings in both Frankfurt and Słubice.

5.4 Ideological fatigue in street-naming practices

The post-1989 transformation period, saw, for the first time, the development of new housing estates, and thus new streets in Słubice. Their naming patterns illustrate a new policy for street naming: apart from encoding national symbols (eight Polish kings and a poet), 11 streets were given
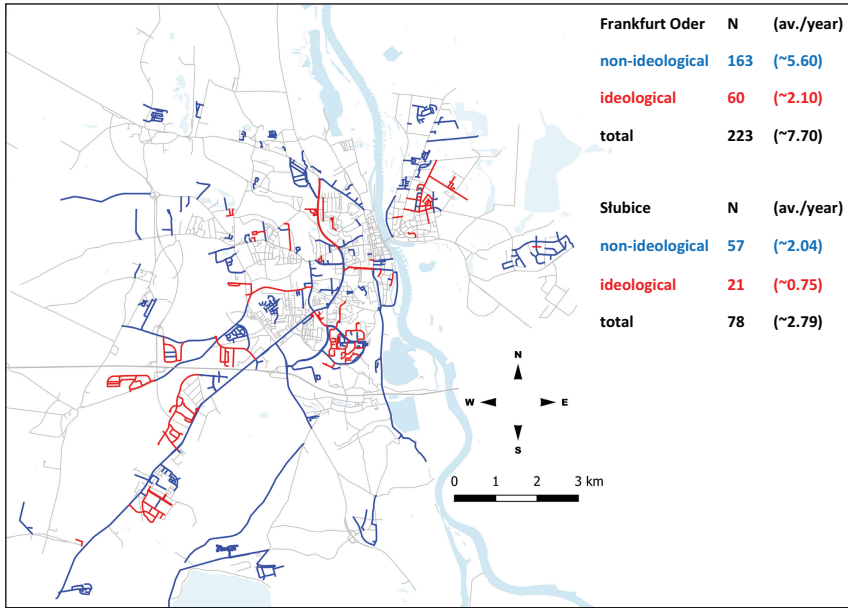
Frankfurt Oder	N	(av./year)
non-ideological	163	(~5.60)
ideological	60	(~2.10)
total	223	(~7.70)
Słubice	N	(av./year)
non-ideological	57	(~2.04)
ideological	21	(~0.75)
total	78	(~2.79)

Figure 8.3 Street (re)naming patterns 1989–2018 with ideological (in red) and non-ideological outcome (in blue) in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice.

non-ideological, nature-related names. In 2015, a further housing development added another 20 fruit names to the streetscape. We interpret this finding as evidence that after the 1989/1990 erasing of communist names, Słubice turned away from ideologically loaded commemorative street names and opted for nature-related odonymy.

While post-Wende naming policy in Frankfurt is not nature oriented, a similar finding is reported for Annaberg-Buchholz, a small community in Eastern Germany (Fabiszak et al. 2021; Buchstaller 2021). Interviews with the local residents suggest that repeated waves of consecutive renamings in the past have made inhabitants – as well as city officials – weary of such ideologically loaded commemoration. They hope that nature-related referents will not be contested at a later time when the political climate might change again.

5.5 Emergence of connection with geographical place after discontinuity in population

Whereas Frankfurt benefits from sedimented layers of localized street names that index its continued emplacement in the geography and history of the Brandenburg region and of Germany as a nation, the street-naming choices of its sister town Słubice illustrate the immediate odonymic effects

of total population replacement, which breaks the connection between the place and its history. We saw this in the first wave of post-WWII renamings, when the marking of the national territory in the streetscape was brought about through reference to figures from state, not local, history and when attempts to make a connection to a more local history were focused on recruiting historical personages from the neighbouring region (see Hagen 2011 on the importance of scale, here regional versus national in the LL). It was only three generations later that the inhabitants of Słubice started to make an effort to make the streetscape their own. In 2000, a formerly unnamed square received the name *Plac Sybiraków* 'Victims/survivors of Siberia Square'. This name testifies to the collective memory of the local population, yet it is not localized memory. As transplanted memory, this name choice runs counter to the common naming strategy of creating a sense of belonging to a place and is rather an indication of cultivated cross-generational trauma of the displaced population.

Notably, the first local figure, a teacher, Marian Grabarski, was only commemorated in Słubice in 2013, nearly 70 years after the population replacement. The minutes from the Town Council session show that this street naming was supported unanimously in a session during which councillors pointed to the need to systematically commemorate outstanding Słubice citizens. Ethnographic interviews with city representatives, journalists, and teachers explicitly mention *ul. Grabarskiego* 'Grabarski Street', indicating the importance of commemorating local activists, and stressing their value for constructing the sense of belonging to the place.

5.6 Streets that reach out across the River Oder

While our interviews contain voices arguing that not enough is done to reach out across the River Oder to reunite the formerly unified cities, street-naming patterns since the end of the Nazi regime have shown gestures of semiotic conciliation, including attempts to bridge the river and the state boundary it signifies. The first notable strategy in Frankfurt (Oder) after WWII (1947–1953) is the reversal of the previous Nazi strategy to mark "lost but not forgotten lands"[5] via public memorialization. The purging of streets commemorating cities and areas that were once part of Germany can be interpreted as an acknowledgement that these geographies are now situated in the neighbouring sovereign country, with the GDR symbolically ceding all claims to the territory.

The next signs of rapprochement between these two cities occur in Frankfurt (Oder) slightly later during the communist regime. In 1976, a central Frankfurt square (*Platz am Carthaus* 'Monastery Square') is named as *Platz der Deutsch-Polnischen Freundschaft* ('German-Polish Friendship Square'). Shortly after, in 1978, two streets are named after important Polish communist comrades, *General-Walter-Strasse*, after a Polish communist

general and *Feliks-Dzierzynski-Strasse*, after the Polish leader of the Soviet state security. Note, however, that since the political transformation, these names have given way to less ideologically loaded denotations: *General-Walter-Strasse* was renamed as *Friedrich-Loeffler-Strasse*, the founder of modern virology and *Feliks-Dzierzynski-Strasse* was incorporated into the *Jungclaussenweg*, named after an important horticulturalist. In 1991, even *Platz der Deutsch-Polnischen Freundschaft* has gone back to its historical name *Carthausplatz*, referring to a cloister that used to stand there and that became part of the newly inaugurated Viadrina University.

In Słubice, already in 1945, *Prinzenufer* 'Prince's Bank' was renamed as *ul. Piecka* (Wilhelm Pieck was then the leader of the GDR), which in 1990 underwent decommunization and was changed to *ul. Nadodrzańska* 'Along the River Oder Street'. In 2003, before Poland's accession to the EU, a hitherto unnamed square received the name *Plac Frankfurcki* 'Frankfurt Square' after the sister border town across the River Oder. In Frankfurt, Słubice is commemorated by *Slubicerstrasse*. Yet, the inhabitants of Słubice do not see them as equal in significance. During our interview, a Słubice Town Hall spokesperson commented as follows:

> In Słubice, it [*Plac Frankfurcki*] is a nice square. Renovated, in the city centre, near Collegium Polonicum, there is a Wikipedia monument there now. In Frankfurt, *Słubice Street*, is this small street leading to the bridge … That's it exactly. Again! This is exactly the type of mistake that the town made in the past. If they decided "Let's do something symbolic", it should be based on a partnership. It can't be … "Look there is a beautiful Frankfurt Square", and there – a little piece of something, right?
>
> (Interview with the Słubice Town Hall
> Spokesperson, conducted by AWB, February 2020)

6 Conclusions

Blommaert (2005, 2013) developed the notion of the historicity, which Train (2016) extended to regimes of historicity in LL research, calling for the field to consider past-present-future connections in memorialization in the citytext. More recent LL research has extended the concept of historicity further. Bendl's (2020: 263) study of the communicative (re)appropriation of the Viennese Heroes' Square/*Heldenplatz* describes it as "a spatial palimpsest", "layers of historicity" (following Blommaert 2005: 130) or, as he calls it "polyhistoricity" (Bendl 2020: 267).

Historians remind us of the fact that experiences and regimes of historicity (see e.g., Hartog 2016) are evidenced in the multilayered heritage, tradition, and materiality that commit to public memory regime-specific linguistic and political discourses. The research presented here illustrates

that it is practices such as odonymic choices that are designed to implant a nation's constitutive ideologies, practices, and policies, making (in)visible the past in the present for the future. This chapter presents a historical analysis of memory practices as they get enshrined in street (re) naming practices across a city divided as a result of WWII. Our comparative research illustrates how shared history is lived separately across the River Oder as two states encode memory culture as seen through the prism of their respective political-ideological commemorative priorities. The LL as an expression of ethno-political identity formation and public memory construction brings into sharp focus the time–space (dis)continuities of identity politics as they are expressed in the citytext.

Notes

1 E.g., Azaryahu (1996) on East Berlin, Germany, Azaryahu (2012) on Mannheim and Potsdam, Germany; Borowiak (2012) on Poznań, Poland and Plovdiv, Bulgaria; Light (2004) on Bucharest, Romania; E. Palonen (2008) on Budapest, Hungary; Sloboda (2009) on Belarus, Czech Republic, and Slovakia; Pavlenko (2010) on Kyiv, Ukraine; Demaj and Vandenbroucke (2016) on Pristina, Kosovo; Rusu (2021) on Sibiu, Romania.

2 Since Słubice was treated as a town in the militarily sensitive border zone throughout most of the communist period, no public maps of the town were issued.

3 According to German spelling conventions if a street name consists of one lexeme, it forms a compound with the word *Strasse* 'Street', e.g., *Kantstrasse*, *Nordstrasse* 'North Street'. If the street name contains a person's first name and family name, it is written with hyphens, as in *Carl-Philipp-Emanuel-Bach-Strasse*.

4 In our interview, a journalist and regional historian claimed that the "Worker's Unity" referred to the 1948 unification of Polish Workers' Party and Polish Socialist Party to form the Polish United Workers Party which ruled throughout the communist period. There are no documents confirming this claim. The name may refer to the workers' organization from the 1920s or a weekly that appeared 1916–1918 and was issued by the Polish Socialist Party.

5 These geographies usually refer to cities and areas that used to be situated in Germany but were allocated to Poland or Russia as part of the Treaty of Versailles. A prominent strategy of the Nazi regime (see also Buchstaller et al. 2023b) was to lay claim to such geographical imaginaries by encoding them in the streetscape.

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